

Mirror, Mirror

Cast of Characters:

1. Doctor: America's Psychiatrist
2. America: Representation of The United States of America
3. Host: Host of *Sell It!*
4. Shelly: Co-host on *Sell It!*
5. Black: Representation of Black, African American citizens
6. White: Representation of White Americans

ACT 1

Scene 1: Patient, Doctor Confidentiality

DOCTOR:

(Pacing)

By law, I am forbidden to disclose patient medical information without warrant or court order, but as a psychiatrist you must imagine that I hear some of the craziest stories.

(Stops pacing and talks to the audience)

I mean just last week there was this guy... Wait

(Chuckles)

If I go off on a tangent, I'll never come back. What you are about to bare witness to is a subject matter that has troubled our great nation for a great deal of time. She has been hurting, confused. I tell you all this because we are all share a common love for this great nation and if she is troubled, so are we.

Scene 2: America in therapy

Doctor:

Let's try this again America

AMERICA:

(Stands in front of the mirror. Eyes are shut tight and her speech trembles)

I...I can't do it Doc. You know what happened last time. Don't you. You, you had to get a new mirror. And it's not me!

(Turns to scan the audience with wide eyes. Shuts eyes and faces the mirror)

DOCTOR:

Look at me America

AMERICA:

(Turns to the Doctor)

DOCTOR:

(Points at the mirror)

Now turn to the mirror and try again. America, you can do this. I have believed in you since the day you were born to a Declaration of Independence, swore allegiance and showed patriotism in times of war and turmoil. Understand child, that this is not the first time you have experienced this type of confusion. Remember our Civil War Sessions?

AMERICA:

(With eyes still shut, sits down, turns to face the doctor, and opens them.)

I remember.

DOCTOR:

Good. Now think back to how we got through that phase of your history.

(Gets up and moves the mirror next to the white board. Attempts to recognize herself)

You had to accept yourself for who you were. What happens internally, whether we like it or not is part of who we are. Just look.

AMERICA:

(Turns to look at the mirror. Her eyes open and she screams.)

It's not me...

(Weeping)

That thing...

DOCTOR:

Your reflection...

AMERICA:

(Gets closer to the mirror)

DOCTOR:

(Stands up and walks toward the mirror)

(Media component 1: Capstan cigarette commercial)

Scene 3: Establishment

DOCTOR:

(Takes a step forward)

Media is the mirror in which the United States looks for its reflection. Tell me what you saw...

America:

(Faces the audience. Eyes widen and a smile slowly creeps onto her face)

Happiness. I saw smiles and people. Life seemed so bright and beautiful. Doctor, I felt an emptiness, like something was missing. But that tune is just so darn catchy...

(Hums advertisement tune and dances)

DOCTOR:

America focus. What is missing?

AMERICA:

I don't know doctor. There is an absence of color? Wh..where are... Didn't my Civil War end slavery. I mean, the Emancipation Proclamation, Amendments 13-15..."All persons born or naturalized in the United States....are citizens of the United States." Where are the rest of my people born or naturalized in the United States Doc? I don't understand!

DOCTOR:

(Reaches out to touch America's shoulder)

They all happened...Keep talking through it

AMERICA:

If all of those happened then why are there no African-Americans in my reflection? They didn't just evaporate into the air! Can you explain what's going on here? There are nearly 135 million people that just went poof.

DOCTOR:

(Turns to the audience and stands)

Prior to the Civil Rights Movement, the nation's value of race was made evident by segregation laws. For most African-Americans living in the south, daily life consisted of encountering a variety of race specific restaurants, water fountains, stores, entrances, and so on. At the conclusion of their day spent navigating through the racially divided South, they could come home and relax with a bit of good old American television. This was a time when viewers could watch shows that were to reflect life in America and find advertisements for the newest products. The tensions and separation between black and white Americans translated into the media and advertisements. With television being the the latest medium of information communication and over two million television filling the homes of America, tensions and separations lead to no representation of African-Americans in media or advertisement. A large portion of America was missing from its media reflection.

(Turns and directs attention to the white board)

America and Doctor:

(Change into Sell It! Costume and Host stands in the front while Shelly is in the back facing Host.)

Scene 4: Sell it

Host:

Hello and welcome to...

(Audio: Audience "Sell it to me!")

Shelly:

(Flips queue card)

Host:

Where you win what you sell! Today we have a very special episode planned for y'all. For those of you out there who are new to the show, we usually have a set of all American competitors ready to go. Today we're gonna pull a little switch-a-roo on ya. All of the competitors will be coming from our...Uh Shelly I think you gotta lil mistake on my queue card back there darlin'.

We don't allow...

SHELLY:

No sir, the card's right.

HOST:

(Fixes tie and clears throat. Reads with hesitation)

Today all of our competitors will be coming from our...

(Coughs and mumbles)

Our interracial audience

SHELLY:

Hey Dave! They couldn't hear you. Gotta speak up.

HOST:

(Fakes a smile and speaks in a loud announcer like voice)

All of our participants will be coming from our audience of many colors. Do we have any volunteers?

(Scans audience for volunteers. Chooses one white individual and one black individual.)

*Keep in mind reasons for not choosing anyone of another race. No Latino/Hispanic participants because although they did experience prejudice and discrimination they were not the issues at the heart of the Civil Rights Movement. The highest tensions were between white and black citizens. Questions, preferably should be directed to Shelly.

HOST:

Please tell the our in house audience and the folks at home your names.

(Waits for responses)

SHELLY:

(Gives name tags to competitors and sets up game materials on the table)

HOST:

Now for the rules, seeing as we have a new comer to the stage

(Looks at black participant)

Each competitor will have 15 seconds to advertise their product. At the conclusion of the round we will view an actual commercial for the product and the audience

(Looks at audience and back at the competitors)

will get to decide on the winner. The winner then has the option of joining us in the doubles round. Remember audience members you can also vote for the commercial to have sold the product best. Everybody got that? Any questions?

*You may answer questions from the audience if they appear. All questions are to be fully answered, but quickly to prevent loss of much time. Questions, preferably should be directed to Shelly.

HOST:

Shelly, ready with the timer?

SHELLY:

(Nods)

HOST:

...Alright let's begin...Competitor one...

Buzzer Rings

Competitor two you may begin

Buzzer Rings

Great job...both of you. It is now time to view the actual commercial for this product.

Commercial Plays

Shelly if you will, prepare to take the tally.

HOST:

If you believe that Competitor one sold the product best, please raise your hand....Competitor 2...and those for the commercial...Alright folks there you have it Competitor number (White competitor) wins by a la-a-a- ndslide! Do you wish to join us for the doubles rounds?...Great!

(Turns to the audience and points)

We'll be back after this short commercial break.

(Whispers to Shelly)

Make sure this episode does not air. I don't care what you have to do. I won't have no negro be on my show for the world to see. Ya' hear

SHELLY:

(Nods. Takes off Shelly Costume and faces the mirror)

HOST:

(Sits in Doctor chair and puts glasses back on. Takes note in note pad)

Scene 5: 1950's Reflection Debrief

DOCTOR:

America turn around. Tell me what you saw.

AMERICA:

(Turns around and lies down in patient chair.)

I still don't see me. There's some sort of disconnect between...like I said before all the legislation and documents passed by government....What's going on with me Doc. I'm split. I've got two different groups in me, The people in one group

(Holds left hand up)

and the government on the other. Chaos brews when people operate separate from the government.

(Holds right hand up then dramatically)

DOCTOR:

But remember America, your government has two levels, state and federal. Laws of the state are uniquely suited to that state or region of states. The south existed separate from the rest of the nation. Life there was truly black and white. What the federal government set in place, those documents and legislation that you are talking about, were all in place and enforced, but Jim Crow eclipsed influence from outside the South.

AMERICA:

(Sits up and faces Doctor)

And the people just let this happen? I thought they were stronger, smarter, and better than that. Since when do Americans sit back and let themselves be the victim to such oppression.

(Stands up and paces quickly. Face is flustered)

Doc, there is obviously something wrong with me. Don't they realize this contradicts the very meaning of the word American. I don't understand, I just don't get it.

DOCTOR:

(Reaches hand toward American and motions her to sit down)

America please, come sit...

AMERICA:

(Stops pacing and turns toward the audience. Stomps)

They need stand up and do something about this.

DOCTOR:

(Stands up and ushers America to her seat)

AMERICA:

(Reluctantly sits down)

DOCTOR:

(Crosses legs and sits back in chair)

I'd like to try something with you, if you don't mind...To tap into your deep Psyche...

AMERICA:

By that you mean...

DOCTOR:

(Leans in toward America)

Hypnosis dear. From what we have experienced in this session, I am beginning to think that what you need is an understanding and not a diagnosis.

AMERICA:

(Throws hands in the air)

Well that's obvious. Good job Doc...Good job.

DOCTOR:

(Scribbles notes in notepad and leans back)

So you are willing to take part in the hypnosis, yes?

AMERICA:

At this point I'll try anything.

DOCTOR:

(Reaches to the desk and gets the necklace. Stands over America and sings)

We shall not, we shall not be moved, (2x)

Just like a tree that's planted by the water

We shall not be moved

(Snaps fingers and spins left. Removes Doctor costume)

AMERICA:

(Looks straightforward. Stands and walks to the back of the room. Removes America costume)

Scene 6: The Civil Rights Movement

BLACK:

(Wandering and mumbling)

Can't go here, can't be there, can't drink here, can't eat there, oops not my entrance....

(Repeat 3x)

WHITE:

(Looks oddly at Black.)

You, there. Negro!

(Walks up to Black.)

Don't you hear me...

BLACK:

Can't go here, can't be there, can't drink here, can't eat there, oops not my entrance....

(Wanders to the front of the room and stands center.)

WHITE:

(Follows Black to the front of the room.)

Can't you hear or do you got too much...

BLACK:

(Loud)

I hear you! Sheesh! Been listnin' ma whole life. Shut up!

(Stands still, arms at side)

Media Component 3: CIVIL rights clips AND images

WHITE:

(Walks to stand opposite of)

BLACK:

(Frantic)

Been listin' all my life. I been listin' all my life. Can't go here, can't be there, can't drink here, can't eat there, oops not my entrance....

(Steps forward)

We've been listin' all our lives and tell me where it's got us...Nowhere. Mamas slavin', dadies sweat workin', children bein' forced to accept reality, unjust. I stroll down these streets a prisoner before conviction. Rat-a-tat...Tat-a-rat. Hear my cup glide cross these bars. Rat-a-tat...Tat-a-rat. Hear my cup glide cross these bars. And as I stroll down these streets, maybe into that grass, for pleasure, enjoyment, fresh wide open spaces...

WHITE:

(Firm and loud)

“In the state of Georgia and Alabama: It shall be unlawful for colored people to frequent any park owned or maintained by the city for the benefit, use and enjoyment of white person.”

BLACK:

Never mind, I won't be goin' there. I peer through the bars of my cell and with an ignorant eye see a white world freckled with the color of Negro.

White:

Best believe that's what you see. A people separated is a people independently strong, long as the strong are white. They've been separate from us since the beginning of American time, and if it ain't broke, why fix it. Segregation comes naturally, like pure white snow rests above swarthy soil.

BLACK:

With an intelligent eye see a world whitewashed, stained by the color of Negro. Excuse me, black is the more political term. And soon to come is African-American. In my cell I am shackled by reinforced ignorance. Success, eclipsed by Jim Crow because separate is equal. Within the bars of my cell are the walls of a Negro school room cast away from society because it can't perform well enough to assimilate. Call me stupid, call me dumb, tell me something I

don't know. My education is only as good as your leftovers. Things you've thrown out and disregarded are cherished by the Negro. The minds of our children are malnourished, fed cold scraps of an education. They are forced to never be fully satisfied. Our children are deprived, hungry, fed and consuming and consumed by reinforced ignorance. Tell me how a cold crusty sandwich amounts to a hot three course meal. Standing in wait of the day when the doors to your private smorgasbord is truly public.

WHITE:

We must...look at the effect of segregation...segregation in public schools deprives these plaintiffs of equal protection under the law.

BLACK:

...ha. 'Bout time these people came to their senses. 'Bout time they realized that. A people divided is a people broken. We ain't goin' nowhere so you best educate us right so we can do something with our lives. But in all of this tensions between me and you, you and me, rises. We rebel while you "protect and serve". Rain pours from all sides as the air is saturated with mist that burns the eyes, disables the able, silences that verbal, through the thick mist and pouring rain beasts dive, landing, biting, tearing the flesh of the able, removing speech from the verbal. This all happens within my cell, my open, public cell. The world has seen...that I have a dream...

WHITE:

(Pretending to be pulled by a dog on a leash toward Black. Reluctant and yelling)

Sick 'em boy. Go get that Nigger...

(Pretends to let go of the leash and tumbles toward black)

BLACK:

(Puts hand up to stop white)

"I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit together at the table of brotherhood."

(Motions White)

WHITE:

(Sits on the floor with legs crossed)

BLACK:

“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”

WHITE:

(Gets up and stands next to White)

“I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: / we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”

BLACK:

(Jokingly)

Eating your words I see

WHITE:

(Extends arm to hand shake)

White and Black:

(Shake Hands and looking directly at each other sing)

Lift every voice and sing, till earth and Heaven ring, Ring with the harmonies of liberty; Facing
the rising sun of our new day begun, Let us march on till victory is won.

BLACK:

(Goes to patient chair resumes America's hypnosis position)

White:

(Goes to doctor chair resumes America's hypnosis position)

Scene 7: Civil Rights Debrief

DOCTOR:

(Snaps Fingers)

America, wake up.

AMERICA:

(Eyes open)

Wow. That was intense and it feels oddly familiar.

DOCTOR:

Would you like to try looking in the mirror again?

AMERICA:

I remember the blacks and whites shaking hands at the end, does that mean that they became more accepting of each other.

DOCTOR:

(Picks up note pad and writes)

What you are talking about was the American people adopting a sense of universal humanism

AMERICA:

(Sits up)

...And that means?

DOCTOR:

What that means is that, the status of African Americans being less than white americans was removed on more than just a governmental level. Humans are treated as humans. Focus shifted to the value of a person as a human and their capabilities, beliefs, and personal characteristics.

AMERICA:

So what you are saying is now that the tensions between blacks and whites has deteriorated, my reflection will really be me. It won't be broken?I am so ready for this let's g...

DOCTOR:

Not necessarily. Remember, your reflection is what the people want to see. Their tangible reality. Although we know segregation to be a thing of the past blacks in your reflection was not tangible in the reality unless they stood on one of the common grounds of the races. The largest of these was sports and athletics. Later on family style sitcoms joined the gradually progressing list.

AMERICA:

(Takes a deep breath)

Okay...I think I can do this.

(Walks to the mirror and looks in it)

Media component 4:Bill Russel and Cosby

DOCTOR and America:

(Change into corresponding Sell It! Costume and set up for scene.)

Scene 8: Sell It part 2

HOST:

(Facing the audience and holding microphone to mouth)

Hello and welcome back to...

(audio: audience sell IT TO ME)

Shelly:

(Flips queue card opposite the room)

Host:

Where you win what you sell! As you all already know we have a very special episode planned for y'all. We have our returning champ here from round one and they will be able to choose a team mate from the audience. You can do that now... and the other competitors will be chosen by my favorite gal here

(Extends arm to Shelly)

Lil' Miss Shelly back there. Would you do me the honor, Shelly?

SHELLY:

(Curtsy and choose members from the audience and ushers them to the front table)

* If the returning white competitor does not choose a black partner, the one or both of the other individuals must be black. Individuals of other races can participate, but in order for black or individuals of another race to win they must sell using one of the common grounds between races.

HOST:

Please tell the our in house audience and the folks at home your names.

(Waits for responses)

SHELLY:

(Gives name tags to competitors and sets up game materials on the table)

HOST:

Now for the rules, each team will have 15 seconds to advertise their product. At the conclusion of the round we will view an actual commercial for the product and the audience

(Looks at audience and back at the competitors)

Will get to decide on the winner. The winner then has the option of joining us in the doubles round. Remember audience members you can also vote for the commercial to have sold the product best. Everybody got that? Any questions?

HOST:

Shelly, ready with the timer?

SHELLY:

(Nods)

Sure am Dave!

HOST:

...Alright let's begin...

Buzzer Rings

Competitor two you may begin

Buzzer Rings

Great job...both of you. It is now time to view the actual commercial for this product.

Commercial Plays

Shelly if you will, prepare to take the tally.

SHELLY:

(Nods and walks to the board to take the tally)

If you believe that Competitor one sold the product best, please raise your hand....Competitor 2...and those for the commercial...Alright folks there you have it

*This section is to improvised. The team who plays to one of the common grounds, if any should win. If neither teams does this than both teams lose and Shelly explains why(i.e times have changed since the comfort the entertainment of all Americans). However there is still some hostility shown to the black participants. If both teams play to a common ground, the tally decides. At the conclusion of disclosing the winner, Host will announce that there is a bag of goodies under the chairs of each audience member with todays featured products.

Host and Shelly:

(Walk to the front of the room and begin to wave)

HOST:

Thanks folks for joining us for this very special episode of Sell It! Where you win what you sell and loose what you don't. See ya' next time.

Music fades

HOST AND SHELLY:

(Change in Doctor and America costume and resume positions)

Scene 9: Conclusion

AMERICA:

(Turns around and sits in patient chair)

Wow. I really have changed. Gone through some real craziness, but I knew the people would. Pull through.

DOCTOR:

I have faith in you America. Just remember something although government and a large majority of America has removed discrimination from their lives, the longevity of its existence are branded into the mind of every American person. This is something they will never forget and subconsciously accept. But, even with that I believe in you and the people.

AMERICA:

..and I believe in us too. Thank you Doctor.

(Stands up and hugs Doctor. Walk toward the door)

You make me feel proud to be your country.

(Exits through the door)

DOCTOR:

(Ecstatic)

Oh my god I have to tell somebody...

(Picks up phone. Drops it and picks it up to dial a number. Hurries toward the door and exits)

Hello, mom...You are not going to believe what just happened..okay so...

